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[Review of] A Cultural Dictionary of Punk

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Rombes, Nicholas. **A cultural dictionary of punk: 1974-1982**. Continuum International Publishers Group, 2009. 320p ISBN [9780826427793](#) pbk, \$24.95

Rombes (English, Univ. of Detroit Mercy), author of *Ramones* (2005), examines the punk phenomenon through 250-plus alphabetically arranged entries covering seminal UK/US bands and music, newsprint headlines, concepts, novels, politicians, and artists. No traditional reference book, this; Brian Cogan's *Encyclopedia of Punk Music and Culture* ([CH, Dec'06, 44-1844](#)) and Al Spicer's *The Rough Guide to Punk* (2006) fill that bill. Users are not likely to intentionally seek conceptual entries such as "blank" or "implied velocity" or headlines from fanzines; those entries will be discovered only through browsing or reading the complete work. Using zines, newspapers, novel excerpts, even his own short fiction, Rombes explores, with humor and an inventive presentation, punk's impact during its culture-changing years while also revealing its relationship to creative works and cultural movements. This scattershot analysis would be more cogent as a developed, topically organized treatise, but its style does suggest the short burst approach of many punk songs. More traditional cultural examinations are available, e.g., Robert Sabin's edited *Punk Rock: So What?* (1999) and Stacy Thompson's *Punk Productions* ([CH, Jan'05, 42-2715](#)), yet Rombes provides pertinent insights not available in these more studied publications. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Lower-level undergraduates through faculty/researchers; general readers.

--R. A. Aken, University of Kentucky

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Related Articles

REFERENCE - Humanities

Cogan, Brian

Encyclopedia of punk music and culture

Choice December 2006 44:44-1844; doi:10.5860/CHOICE.44-1844

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HUMANITIES - Performing Arts - Music

Thompson, Stacy

Punk productions: unfinished business

Choice January 2005 42:42-2715; doi:10.5860/CHOICE.42-2715

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